



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**James L. Oberstar**  
Chairman

**Washington, DC 20515**

**John L. Mica**  
Ranking Republican Member

**October 3, 2007**

David Heymsfeld, Chief of Staff  
Ward W. McCarragher, Chief Counsel

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Conference Report for H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, has recently passed the House and the Senate by substantial margins, 381 to 40 and 81 to 12 respectively. We would respectfully request that you allow this needed authorizing legislation become law. This bill has been under development for many years and it broadly addresses the important water resources needs of our Nation.

Although the Congress and the Administration have traditionally enacted water resources authorization bills every two years, we have not had a bill since 2000. This bill needs to become law now for several reasons. We have an obligation to our non-federal partners to move forward with sound projects and policy changes at the Corps of Engineers. While we share your views on holding down federal spending, this bill does not appropriate any funds. This bill outlines our federal policy and specifies water resources projects that Congress has identified as vital to our national, state, and community interests. We need these authorizations because our existing water navigation infrastructure is aged and deteriorating putting many American cities at a greater risk of flooding than was New Orleans before Katrina. Additionally, aquatic ecosystems such as the Everglades have been degraded and we must keep our commitment to partner in their restoration. Provisions in this Conference Report address all these needs.

The Conference Report authorizes new feasibility studies and projects, and modifications to existing projects that will facilitate their implementation. The bill also mandates policy changes at the Corps of Engineers aimed at restoring the public's faith in the analytical processes of the agency. It is important that we get these issues behind us so that the Corps of Engineers can get back to the business of modernizing our infrastructure and restoring the aquatic ecosystems.

The Conference Report authorizes a backlog of major projects recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers since 2000. The Chief of Engineers has invested millions of dollars in feasibility studies for these projects with an equal amount coming from the non-federal partners. Now that the federal interest and cost effectiveness of these projects have been confirmed, we believe the Government has a responsibility to follow through with its investment and partnership by authorizing those projects.

This bill represents investments in America. These investments will improve trade, protect our homes and businesses from flood damages, and enhance our quality of life by restoring aquatic ecosystems. Trade builds wealth. But to realize the economic benefits of trade, we must have a modern transportation system. To maintain our place in the global economy, the United States must have modern ports and waterways that can bring the world's goods to our door and make America's products competitive on the world market. Our ports and waterways need to be improved to handle the additional traffic and a new, larger class of ships. This Conference Report addresses these needs in several ways including authorizing significant improvements to ports and waterways in our home States of Florida and Louisiana, as well as in Texas, and Virginia. Ten of our nation's ports handle 85 percent of our containerized maritime commerce. This legislation authorizes seven new locks and other navigation improvements on the upper Mississippi River which carries 60 percent of our exported grain.

The Conference Report authorizes our nation's flood damage reduction projects. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita should remind us that it is better to invest in flood protection projects today than to face the cost and social disaster of trying to recover. We can pay by investing now, or pay much more later.

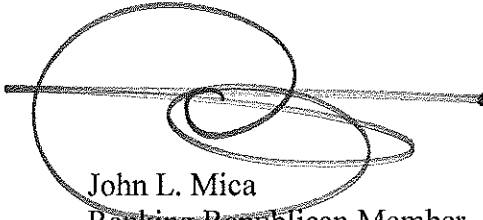
This Conference Report contains critical provisions to restore the Everglades. Restoration of the Everglades has been talked about for years, but with the projects authorized in this bill, actual work and construction of projects can begin. Not only are the Everglades vital to the economy, environment and people of Florida, they are a national treasure that must be cared for and protected for future generations of Americans.

The consequences of not addressing our infrastructure needs were brought home to us most tragically on the afternoon of August 1 when the I-35 bridge in Minneapolis collapsed while we were on the Floor of the House stewarding this Conference Report through the Congress. This event, as well as hurricanes Katrina and Rita, should serve to remind us that we can address our infrastructure needs now, or we will have to deal with the tragedies that will come from our neglect. We hope you will choose to approve this bill to invest in America's water resources.

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We understand and appreciate your concern for the cost of this bill. However, we must remember that the Conference Report represents the overdue demand of 3 Water Resources Development Acts. In addition, these are authorizations not appropriations. These projects represent the most current and complete list of water resource investments that you and the Congress can consider for budgeting and funding. These projects deserve to be authorized so that they can be considered in the appropriations process. Even if you have reservations about signing this legislation, we urge you not to veto it, but let it become law.

Sincerely,

A stylized, cursive signature of John L. Mica, featuring a large, looping 'S' shape that crosses itself.

John L. Mica  
Ranking Republican Member  
Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure

A cursive signature of Richard H. Baker, written in a fluid, handwritten style.

Richard H. Baker  
Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee on Water  
Resources and Environment